



Mr. Searles Studied by a Sugar Trust Workman.

Nicholas Smith was for three years a fireman in the employ of the American Sugar Refining Company, more familiarly known as the Sugar Trust. During these years he worked twelve hours a day. The terrific heat of the boiler room gradually undermined his health. He asked for leave of absence and obtained it. It took him two weeks to recover.

When he returned he was told that he had been away too long, and that his place had been filled. Since then he has been out of work.

This Nicholas Smith attended a session of the Lexow Trust Investigating Committee while John E. Searles, the treasurer of the Sugar Trust, was on the stand. Mr. Searles told the committee how many millions of dollars the Sugar Trust made every year.

Nicholas Smith desires, through the medium of the Sunday Journal, to tell the Lexow Committee something about the manner in which these millions of dollars are made.

nances hour after hour, and sweated and suffered the tortures of the damned in those hot, stuffy boiler rooms, I never saw this man whose millions I was, in my insignificant capacity, helping to pile up. The first time in my life that I saw Mr. Searles he was giving his testimony to the Lexow committee.

The first thing I heard him say was that when the price of raw sugar fell the consumer did not profit by the fall. He repeated a lot of figures which I did not understand. But I did understand that remark about the fall in the price of raw sugar.

I believe it was during that Summer when half a dozen men in the refinery were prostrated by the heat that this fell in the price of raw sugar occurred. The consumer did not profit by it. Neither did my fellow workmen.

There is one thing that I wish to say before I go any further. I did not like the way Senator Lexow and the other members of the committee treated Mr. Searles. They had ordered him to bring his books and he had refused. They had asked him questions which every bookkeeper in his employ could have answered and he had professed complete ignorance.

Not only did he openly avow that his concern controlled the bulk of the sugar industry, that they made millions out of it every year and that neither the public nor his employees derived any benefit proportionate to the immense profits, but in every way that lay in his power he antagonized the people's representatives and placed obstacles in the way of their work.

And in the face of all this they treated him with the utmost patience and courtesy and leniency as if he were conferring a great benefit upon the community.

There are 112 boilers in the Sugar Trust's Williamsburg refinery, and each fireman has three or four of them to attend to. I worked in this boiler room for three years, from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m. for sixteen and one-half cents an hour.

Mr. Searles is a very economical man. Not a single grain of sugar goes to waste in that refinery. As for labor going to waste—why, they even sold beer to us to keep us from going out to get it.

I heard Mr. Searles tell how the annual profits of the Sugar Trust sometimes amounted to \$25,000,000 a year. I am a patient man and I have learned to bear suffering without a murmur. They all learn that, those poor devils in the refinery.

Yet when I heard that man, who goes to a Christian church and who professes to be a believer in the words of Christ, tell how he made \$25,000,000 a year profit from the labor of those thousands of poor, half-starved Russians and Poles whom he has employed to take the places of strong, earnest citizens of his own country, who could not afford to work for those pitiful wages—when I heard him say that and thought of all the men whom I had seen faint after their day's work in that stifling refinery, and thought of the hundreds of women who

cried because their husbands had been driven out of employment, and thought of all the suffering that is pent up within the black walls of that vile place, it was all I could do to keep from jumping from my seat and crying:

"You have made your \$25,000,000 out of the souls and blood of men!"

He swore that the condition of the men in the refinery was better now than it was before the days of trusts, when all the refineries were in active competition with one another. I wish he had asked me to help him out in this assertion.

It would have given me exquisite delight to tell him that the cookers, the experts in the sugar refining business who once made as much as \$75 and \$100 a week were now earning from \$25 to \$28.

I would gladly have helped Mr. Searles by reminding him that machinists and good mechanics get from \$12 to \$18 a week in the refinery of the Sugar Trust; that the firemen who face that awful heat of the furnaces get 16½ cents an hour; that steamfitters get 15 cents an hour, and that packers, shovellers and laborers who work in water and steam day and night, frequently in a temperature of 140 degrees, get 14½ cents an hour for it.

But I find that I have omitted the point of it all. These wages are not so bad. Fifteen cents an hour for a poor man with a wife and children is, after all, not the worst thing in the world. I know men who would take even less and bless Mr. Searles and all his millions, and pray for him daily, for giving them the chance of earning it.

But the men cannot stand the work a sufficient number of hours to make decent wages!

LEXOW HAS NO DOUBT OF IT.

To W. R. Hearst, New York Journal:

I have no reason to doubt the statements made by Mr. Smith regarding the Sugar Trust and its treatment of its employees. Therefore, regarding that portion of what he has written, I have nothing to criticize.

So far as any inferences to the effect that the committee is discriminating against the workingman in favor of the rich man are concerned, I have only to say that we rely on the record, and not the statements, insinuating such a situation which are not borne out by the facts.

C. E. LEXOW.

Sugar King Searles, Who Made \$25,000,000 in Sugar.

Most of the men engaged in this severe labor are foreigners of the lowest type. They are mere beasts of burden, formed for no other purpose than continuous work. Yet few of them can stand the strain long enough to make more than \$8 a week—and the profits of the Trust are \$500,000 a week!

Oh, Mr. Searles, were not the wages in the engine room formerly from \$15 to \$20 a week, and are they not to-day \$11.88 a week for six days' work of twelve hours each? Why did you not tell that to Senator Lexow?

Had I trusted myself to speak I would have sprung from my seat and would have told a story that would have made every honest man in the room cry "Shame!" upon Mr. Searles.

I would have told them that, before the

days of the Sugar Trust over 90 per cent of the 5,000 employees of the various refineries were Americans, or English speaking Irish or German-Americans.

while to-day not 5 per cent of the 3,500 employees can speak a word of English.

I would have told them that no man employed in those great works to-day, with the exception of a handful of bricklayers and carpenters and the 500 or 600 truckmen, who are strong enough to hold their own, can belong to any labor organization.

I would have told them my own story—how, overcome by the fierce heat of those furnaces, I was taken sick and faint and had to leave my work and spend what little money I had saved in doctor's bills and medicines—while those who were stronger and could keep it up longer than I kept steadily on piling in coal and piling up those millions and millions of dollars for Mr. Searles.

Yes, but that would have been a pretty story for Mr. Searles to hear!

And they are kind-hearted in that right, fiery! The fireman and the machinists sweat all day and sweat all night and suffer from an unquenchable thirst. The Sugar Trust takes pity on their deplorable condition and hires special men to bring in beer for the sufferers. Well, it's the most generous thing they do over there. It actually contains a grain of philanthropy. But, as pure philanthropy is a violation of the regulations and by-laws of the Trust, they charge the men a certain sum for every glass of beer they drink. The element of philanthropy that I refer to lies in the fact that the Sugar Trust makes no profit on the beer.

How I longed to be, for a few minutes, in the place of Senator Lexow!

"Is it not true," I would have asked Mr. Searles, "that your company has driven more than 3,000 American citizens out of employment and replaced them by foreigners who are not citizens and who are willing to work for a slave's wages?"

And then I would have asked him these questions:

"Is not employment in the wiring and cooking room, for which 14½ cents an hour is paid, dangerous to health?"

"During the hot weather do your men not succumb by the score to the terrible temperature in the wiring and cooking room?"

"Do you make any allowance for a man who is taken sick through this terrible exposure?"

"Is it not a fact that no man can stand the work required of him thirty weeks out of fifty-two?"

"Is it not a fact that membership in a labor organization will cause a workingman's discharge?"

Gentlemen of the Lexow Committee: If you wish to know the truth concerning the doings of the Sugar Trust, its methods, its profits, its system and its tortures, call the superintendents, the managers, the foremen. They are not millionaires, like Mr. Searles, nor are they as expert at repartee as that gentleman is.

Promise them immunity from Mr. Searles's resentment and then compel them to answer you.

Nicholas Smith
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